

Press release

Botticelli

13 November 2009 – 28 February 2010

Städel Museum

The Städel Museum in Frankfurt is bustling with preparations for a major, extraordinary presentation: the first cross-genre exhibition dedicated to Sandro Botticelli (1444/45–1510) in Germany scheduled to be shown from 13 November 2009 to 28 February 2010. The extremely complex and lengthy loan negotiations have been concluded in the meantime, and a number of crucial works such as *Pallas and the Centaur* from the Uffizi, the *Madonna Guidi* from the Louvre, the *Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici* from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, or the unique painting *The Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child* from the National Gallery of Scotland have been secured. Just for the famous *Pallas*, a key work of the Uffizi, Director Max Hollein and curator Dr. Andreas Schumacher, decisively supported by Italy's Ambassador to Germany Antonio Puri Purini, have been in contact with their colleagues in Florence for more than two years. Thanks to loans from the Metropolitan Museum New York, the National Gallery London, and the Dresden Old Masters Gallery, the exhibition in the Städel Museum will bring together the four large-format *St. Zenobius* panels for the first time since their original presentation. All in all, it will be possible to show more than 80 works by Botticelli, his workshop, and some of his contemporaries like Filippino Lippi or Andrea del Verrocchio. The most important collections in Europe and the USA support the show with central works by the Florentine Renaissance artist. The exhibition focuses on precious creations from all phases of Botticelli's oeuvre, confronts them with thematically related works by his colleagues, and examines them in the historical context of their making. Organized in three parts, it explores the painter's various tasks and thematic fields. The portraits and allegorical paintings of the first section illustrate the degree of sophistication with which Botticelli drew on this highly developed genre and enriched it through new impulses. While the second chapter centers on his famous mythological representations of goddesses and heroines of virtue, the third part is dedicated to his abundant religious oeuvre.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Commerzbank-Stiftung. Additional support comes from the Alnatura Produktions- und Handels GmbH.

Sandro Botticelli's painting has become a landmark of Italian Renaissance, and his monumental *Idealized Portrait of a Lady* (c. 1480) numbers among the Städel Museum's main works. The ideal beauty of his mythological figures and the elegant grace of his Virgin figures make his creations the epitome of Florentine painting in the Golden Age under Lorenzo the Magnificent's rule. It is less his masterful translation of Renaissance ideals which is the reason for the much-praised magic of his pictorial solutions, but rather the exceptional expressiveness of his figurative creations presenting their classically refined

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beauty in a solemn manner and with an often melancholy note. Initially trained as a goldsmith and then apprenticed to Fra Filippo Lippi, Sandro Botticelli, next to Verrocchio, Ghirlandaio, and the Pollaiuolo brothers, ranks among the most successful painters in Florence in the second half of the quattrocento. From 1470 on, he received prestigious public commissions and made a name for himself as a painter of large altarpieces. Throughout his life, Botticelli was in the ruling Medici family's and their supporters' good graces. Fulfilling their wishes for innovative decorative paintings, the master could not only rely on his knowledge of Florentine traditions and of ancient art, but also on definite suggestions and concepts from the circle of humanists gathered around Lorenzo de' Medici. Held in equally high esteem as both a panel and a fresco painter, Botticelli enjoyed a high standing beyond his native Florence and was thus one of the artists summoned to decorate the walls of the Sistine Chapel in Rome by Pope Sixtus IV in 1481. It was particularly his much-discussed late work that brought out the characteristic features of his original style in an extreme manner. Guided by the art of drawing, Botticelli followed his penchant for rendering his figures with sharp contours, strong movements, and abundant gestures, grounding his compositions rather on textures of lines and surfaces than on spaces and volumes. In this respect, his painting had stood out against his competitors' work and current theoretical demands since his early years. This is one of the reasons why art-historical research, which has devoted a vast number of major monographs and innumerable work studies to Botticelli, still assigns a special position to the artist without fail even 500 years after his death on 17 May 1510.

Curator: Dr. Andreas Schumacher (Städel Museum)

Research assistants: Gabriel Dette M. A. and Dr. Bastian Eclercy (Städel Museum)

Catalogue: On the occasion of the exhibition, a comprehensive catalogue edited by Andreas Schumacher and comprising texts by Cristina Acidini, Gabriel Dette, Bastian Eclercy, Hans Körner, Lorenza Melli, Ulrich Rehm, Volker Reinhardt, Anna Rühl, and Andreas Schumacher will be published by Hatje Cantz.

Venue: Städel Museum, Schaumainkai 63, 60596 Frankfurt

Press preview: Thursday, 12 November 2009, 11.00 a.m.

Exhibition dates: 13 November 2009 – 28 February 2010

Opening hours: Tuesday, Friday – Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Information: www.staedelmuseum.de, info@staedelmuseum.de,
phone +49(0)69-605098-0, fax +49(0)69-605098-111

Admission: Tuesday – Friday: 10 euros, reduced 8 euros, family ticket 20 euros; Saturday and Sunday: 12 euros, reduced 10 euros, family ticket 20 euros; free for children under 12 years of age

Media partner: VGF – Verkehrsbetriebe Frankfurt am Main

Culture partner: hr2 kultur

Press Office: Dorothea Apovnik (head), Axel Braun (press officer), Marijke Gassen

Städel Museum, Dürerstraße 2, 60596 Frankfurt, phone +49(0)69-605098-234,

fax +49(0)69-605098-188, presse@staedelmuseum.de, press downloads at www.staedelmuseum.de